



April 2006

DOH PUB. #331-304
(Revised)

Fact Sheet

Water Use Efficiency Rule

Distribution Leakage Standard

Background

One of the three elements of the proposed draft water use efficiency rule is setting a state distribution system leakage standard. Since the late 1980s, the Department of Health (DOH) has encouraged utilities to reduce unaccounted-for water to 20 percent or less. Municipal water suppliers would be required to meet a state standard to minimize loss of water from leakage within their distribution system.

Water Use Efficiency Rule Schedule

July 2006 – Mail proposed rule

August 2006 – Public hearings

August to September 2006 – Review formal comments & finalize rule

September 2006 – Adopt rule

October 2006 – Effective date

Minimizing leakage in water systems has many benefits for water utilities and their customers. The benefits include:

- Improved operational efficiency.
- Reduced potential for contamination.
- Extended life of facilities.
- Reduced potential property damage and water system liability.
- Reduced water outage events.
- Improved public relations.
- Lowered water system operational costs.

Distribution System Leakage Standard

The proposed draft rule would require all municipal water suppliers to maintain their distribution system leakage at or less than 10 percent of their production or use an approved alternative methodology's numerical standard(s). Municipal water suppliers would need to report their leakage as a percentage and leakage volume or other approved numerical standard(s) on an annual basis. DOH would allow alternative methodologies for determining leakage if specific criteria were followed. DOH believes that only through a fully metered water system can a municipal water supplier accurately determine its leakage. DOH would require municipal water suppliers to have source and service meters within 10 years of rule adoption (See Fact Sheet, *Metering Requirements*, DOH PUB 331-306.).



HELPING TO ENSURE SAFE AND RELIABLE DRINKING WATER

The distribution system leakage standard would apply to the distribution grid of the water system and includes reservoirs located within the distribution system. Municipal water suppliers may exclude from the leakage standard calculation water lost through transmission lines and raw water reservoirs. If the municipal water supplier chose to exclude this water, it would have to be described in the planning document. All water that is not metered, monitored, and tracked would be considered leakage. Municipal water suppliers could account for uses such as fire protection, flushing, construction, and other non-revenue water by metering or by estimating, using credible means. Regional water suppliers could determine distribution system leakage based on the entire regional water system.

Leakage Reporting and Compliance

The proposed draft rule would require a municipal water supplier to report leakage information in planning documents and annually in performance reports. Compliance with the leakage standard would be based on a three-year average. Water systems not meeting the distribution system leakage standard would be required to develop and implement a Water Loss Control Action Plan, which would identify the steps and timelines for reducing leakage. The Water Loss Control Action Plan would also be the place to address technical or economic concerns which could affect the water systems ability to comply with the standard.

Municipal water suppliers whose water systems are not fully metered would need to report annually on their progress towards installing meters on all service connections.

For More Information

If you have comments or questions about the proposed draft rule, please contact:

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Additional information can be found on the Web at:

http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/municipal_water/municipal_water_law.htm

